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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005839

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INITIAL CALL ON FORMER PRESIDENT
SULEYMAN DEMIREL

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric Edelman; reasons: 1.5 (b,d).

1. (C) Summary: In an introductory call by the Ambassador, former president Demirel urged a repair to the relationship between the Pentagon and TGS; underscored the importance of higher-impact U.S. public diplomacy; called for the U.S. to project its power by finishing the job in Iraq without major UN influence; and cautioned us on the Kurds. Ambassador reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to stay the course in Iraq, noted the importance of broadening our bilateral focus beyond Iraq; and reaffirmed our commitment to deal with PKK/KADEK. End summary.

2. (C) Warmly welcoming the Ambassador to Turkey and wishing him success in what will be a "tough job", former president (1993-2000) Suleyman Demirel laid out a 40-minute comprehensive vision of how to restrengthen bilateral relations, handle Iraq, and deal with the Kurdish question.

3. (C) In the long history of our alliance, Turkey and the U.S. have faced problems before, for instance 1975-78 the U.S. applied an arms embargo in the wake of Turkey's intervention in Cyprus, Demirel recalled. However, we worked through the problems. Both sides made mistakes in the run-up to the Parliament's March 1 rejection of U.S. deployment to Iraq through Turkey. But it's not the end of the world. Now, despite unfortunate doubts in the U.S. regarding Turkey's trustworthiness, it is important for the Pentagon and TGS to improve their relations.

4. (C) There is a challenge for the U.S. on the public relations side as well, Demirel said. He understood that the main purpose of OIF was to demonstrate the strength of the U.S. after September 11. But the man in the street doesn't understand why the U.S. hasn't yet found Iraq's WMD or Saddam. People call the U.S. an occupier, where the word in Turkish is even harsher. This is wrong. The U.S. liberated Iraq. But why have you not been able to explain this to the world? People doubt whether the U.S. will stick it out. U.S. failure is not an option, and it would have been better if President Bush had not said in his Sept. 8 address that the U.S. doesn't have the resources to finish the job. If one says "I am powerful but I'm unable to do the job" one gets no respect. The U.S. should not leave Iraq to the UN. Regarding the upcoming U.S. \$8.5 billion loan, Washington should emphasize that there is no linkage with a possible Turkish troop contribution to a stabilization force.

5. (C) If the U.S. and Turkey cannot be friends, Turkey won't be helpful in the region, Demirel continued. Turkey is very sensitive about the Kurds. They are our brothers, our citizens. Yet nationalism based on race is something powerful, and there are 25 million Kurds, although not all speaking the same language. Some talk about a Kurdish state. But it must not be from Turkish territory as Kurdish nationalists desire. The PKK question is of utmost sensitivity for Turkey, and the U.S. should never underestimate this. Turkey lost "40,000" people fighting the PKK. We know the U.S. indebtedness to the Kurds in Iraq for their assistance against Saddam, but U.S. sympathies should not extend to the point where Turkey is hurt. A federal Kurdistan in Iraq will hurt Turkey, because it will become independent in 10-25 years.

6. (C) In response, the Ambassador laid out the post-conflict challenges the coalition faces but underscored President Bush's and the American people's determination to see the job done and done right. An \$87 billion supplemental request is proof of our seriousness. We are also committed to consulting with Turkey, as demonstrated by talks on technical details surrounding a possible Turkish deployment and the beginning of talks on a common strategy to deal with PKK/KADEK. Bilateral relations were driven by Iraq over the past year but our relations must develop on a broader basis. Turkey's economic and political success and full integration into the EU will have important resonance for the larger question of reform in the Arab world. On a broader plane,

what is the key to renewing U.S.-Turkish ties?

17. (C) Noting that during his studies in the U.S. that Americans are in a hurry to get the job done, Demirel counseled above all else, patience with the different sense of time and timing in Turkey. He added as essential elements (1) maintenance of a full dialogue with Turkish authorities across the board; (2) development of full, open relations with the press; (3) the importance for Turkish public opinion of even small gestures of good will.

18. (C) Demirel noted in closing that he will be in the States for 10 days from Sept. 29 to help commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Eisenhower Fellowships (of which he was a beneficiary) in Philadelphia and to deliver speeches at CUNY in New York, Cornell, and several SUNY campuses. Demirel's memory remains acute; he retains the ability to give a sweeping summary based on concrete facts; his stamina appears intact.
EDELMAN